

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, CSCE, GE, GW
SUBJECT: HONECKER INTERVIEW WITH THE SAARBRUECKER ZEITUNG

SUMMARY: THE HONECKER INTERVIEW OF FEBRUARY 17
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REPRESENTS AN UP-DATING OF GDR POSITIONS ON BERLIN,
FRG/GDR RELATIONS, CSCE, AND THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, BUT BREAKS NO SIGNIFICANT
NEW GROUND. IT ASSERTS THAT THE RECENT GDR ACTIONS
WITH REGARD TO BERLIN ARE COMMENSURATE WITH ITS
ALLEGED SOVEREIGNTY IN EAST BERLIN AND REITERATES
THE GDR INTERPRETATION THAT THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT

APPLIES ONLY TO WEST BERLIN. HONECKER DEFENDS NEW GDR VISA REGULATIONS, REMOVAL OF GDR CONTROLS BETWEEN EAST BERLIN AND THE GDR AND AFFIRMS THAT THE VERORDNUNGSBLATT HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED. IN DOING SO, HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF DISREGARDING THE INTERESTS AND RIGHTS OF THE WESTERN ALLIES IN BERLIN.

HONECKER'S REMARKS ON FRG/GDR RELATIONS SUGGEST A DESIRE FOR AN IMPROVMENT IN RELATIONS BASED UPON FRG RECOGNITION OF GDR SOVEREIGNTY AND CITIZENSHIP, BUT ONLY ON GDR TERMS. HE MENTIONS FAMILY REUNIFICATION IN POSITIVE TERMS. THERE IS NO MENTION OF THE RECENT EXCHANGE OF AIDDE MEMOIRES ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG PERMREP IN EAST BERLIN. HOWEVER, HONECKER ATTACKS FRG ALLEGED INTERFERENCE IN GDR INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND STATES THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN TRAVEL BETWEEN THE FRG AND GDR DEPEND ON FRG RECOGNITION OF GDR CITIZENSHIP.

HONECKER'S STATEMENTS ON CSCE AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH PREVIOUS GDR POSITIONS.

ON THE DOMESTIC SIDE, HONECKER'S INTERVIEW APPEARS INTENDED TO COUNTER UNCERTAINTY AMONG THE GDR POPULATION REGARDING GDR POLICIES. IT ALSO SEEMS CALCULATED TO DAMPEN POPULAR EXPECTATIONS ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS IN GDR TRAVEL POLICY. HONECKER'S BRIEF REMARKS ON BIERMANN MAY INDICATE A FURTHER EASING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UP ON THE GDR CULTURAL SCENE. END SUMMARY.

1. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND (ND) AND THE BERLINER ZEITUNG (BZ) FEBRUARY 22 PUBLISHED HONECKER'S FEB. 17 INTERVIEW WITH SAARBRUECKER ZEITUNG (SZ) EDITOR VOLTMER. THE TEXT SEEMS TO BE A SLIGHTLY EDITED VERSION, WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OMISSION BEING NO MENTION OF SPECIFIC NUMBERS OF APPROVED APPLICATIONS FOR EMIGRATION. HONECKER INTERVIEWS WITH WESTERN MEDIA ARE RARE; AND WE CAN RECALL ONLY TWO OR THREE, INCLUDING A 1972 INTERVIEW WITH NYT COLUMNIST SULZBERGER. THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT NEW DEPARTURES IN HONECKER'S REMARKS. THE APPEARANCE OF THE INTERVIEW NOW, IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT GDR MOVES AROUND BERLIN AND THE GDR ATTACKS AGAINST THE PERMREP HERE, SEEM DESIGNED TO CONVEY A FIRM BUT MODERATE POSITION ON A VARIETY OF INNER-GERMAN ISSUES.

AT THE SAME TIME, HIS TREATMENT OF ALLIED INTEREST

RE. BERLIN APPEARS TO US CAVALIER.

2. QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT (QA): HONECKER REPEATED THE GDR VIEW THAT THE QA APPLIES ONLY TO WEST BERLIN AND CHARGED THAT VISITS BY HIGH-LEVEL FRG POLITICIANS TO WEST BERLIN AND ESTABLISHING FRG OFFICES THERE HAVE THE PURPOSE OF "RESURRECTING THE IMPRESSION THAT WEST BERLIN IS A PART, EVEN A CENTER, OF THE FRG." HE SAID THE PROPOSED DIRECT ELECTION OF BERLIN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT "UNDERCUT" THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENT.

3. TRAVEL REGIME: HONECKER STATED THAT THE RULES FOR VISITORS FROM WEST BERLIN TO EAST BERLIN ARE APPLIED "GENEROUSLY" GY GDR OFFICIALS AND NOTED THAT 14 MILLION WEST BERLINERS HAVE VISITED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SINCE THE GDR-SENAT AGREEMENT CAME INTO FORCE.

4. GDR MEASURES ON BERLIN: HONECKER CONFIRMED THAT THE VERORDNUNGSBLATT HAS CEASED PUBLICATION IN ORDER TO "SAVE PAPER". HE CALLED IMPOSITION OF VISA REQUIREMENTS ON FOREIGN VISITORS TO EAST BERLIN A COMMON FEATURE OF SOVEREIGNTY AS WAS THE DECISION TO ABOLISH CONTROL POSTS BETWEEN EAST BERLIN AND THE GDR. HE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT THESE MEASURES COULD BE CIRCUMSCRIBED FROM OUTSIDE THE GDR.

5. FRB/GDR RELATIONS: IN GENERAL, HONECKER CHARACTERIZED THE FRG/GDR RELATIONSHIP AS "HEAVILY ENCUMBERED" BLAMING "CIRCLES" IN THE FRG WHO REFUSE TO ACCEPT GDR SOVEREIGNTY. HOWEVER, HONECKER EXPRESSED HOPE THAT "REASON WILL MAINTAIN THE UPPER HAND" AND THAT FRG AND GDR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS COULD BE ACCORDED "EVER GREATER SIGNIFICANCE". HE DID NOT MENTION THE RECENT EXCHANGE OF AIDE MEMOIRES ON THE FRG REPRESENTATION BUT HELD OUT THE PROSPECT FOR "FURTHER NEW TREATIES." HONECKER DID NOT RULE OUT A POSSIBLE MEETING WITH SCHMIDT BUT CONSIDERED IT UNLIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. VISITS: HONECKER SAID THAT MORE HAD BEEN DONE TO IMPROVE VISITS THAN ONE CAN JUSTIFY GIVEN THE ANTI-GDR POSITION AND HOSTILE PROPAGANDA OF THE FRG. TO SUPPORT HIS CASE, HONECKER STATED THAT IN 1976, 3.5 OF A TOTAL 7.9 MILLION VISITORS TO THE GDR FROM NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES CAME FROM THE

FRG; AND THAT 1.1 OF 2.8 MILLION GDR CITIZENS
TRAVELING TO NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, WENT TO
THE FRG.

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R 241635Z FEB 77
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7. TRAVEL: HONECKER SAID THE MAIN FACTOR AFFECTING TRAVEL
BY GDR CITIZENS TO THE FRG WAS NOT THE GDR'S HARD CURRENCY
POSITION BUT THE FRG REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE GDR CITIZENSHIP.
HONECKER STATED THERE COULD BE NO TALK OF FREE TRAVEL TO
THE WESTUNTIL THE FRG CHANGED ITS POSITION ON THIS QUESTION.
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HE ISSUED A VEILED WARNING THAT PEOPLE HOLDING ANTI-GDR ATTITUDES MIGHT NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE GDR SINCE THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO DISREGARD GDR LAW.

8. EMIGRATION: HONECKER CRITICIZED A SUPPOSED FRG CAMPAIGN BASED ON "FAIRYTALE" EMIGRATION FIGURES. THE GDR HAD ALWAYS HAD APPLICATIONS FOR EMIGRATION, HE SAID, AND IS IN FAVOR OF FAMILY REUNIFICATION. FOR HONECKER, HOWEVER, THE GOAL OF FRG-GDR TREATIES WAS NOT TO ALLOW THE FRG TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN EMIGRATION. HE WARNED THAT THOSE WHO MAKE UP STORIES ABOUT INSTABILITY IN THE GDR INCLUDING AN ALLEGED HIGH DESIRE TO EMIGRATE, HAD LAUNCHED A HOSTILE CAMPAIGN THAT WOULD ONLY HAVE A BOOMERANG EFFECT.

9. BORDER INCIDENTS AND ORDERS TO SHOOT: HONECKER MADE AN UNUSUAL PUBLIC ADMISSION THAT GDR BORDER GUARDS HAVE ORDERS TO SHOOT BORDER TRESPASSERS (SCHIESSBEFEHL), AND JUSTIFIED IT IN EFFECT BY CLAIMS THAT THE FRG HAD A SIMILAR OFFER FOR ITS POLICE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THE FRG-GDR BORDER IS THE BORDER BETWEEN NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT AND THUS A MILITARILY PROHIBITED AREA. HE CONSIDERED DETENTE ENCUMBERED NOT BY THE GDR'S BORDER POLICIES, BUT BY THE REFUSAL OF FRG POLITICIANS TO ACCEPT THE GDR BOUNDARY.

10. WESTERN JOURNALISTS: HONECKER SAID THAT CRITICISM OF THE GDR BY WESTERN JOURNALISTS WAS ALLOWED, BUT ""DEFAMATION" AND "INTERFERENCE" COULD NOT BE TOLERATED.

11. BIERMANN: HONECKER CHARGED THAT BIERMANN HAD BEEN OUSTED BECAUSE HE FAILED TO KEEP HIS WORD NOT TO ATTACK THE GDR IN HIS FRG CONCDQS.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS: HONECKER MAINTAINED THAT THE HUMAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE WAS BEING EXAGGERATED IN THE WEST. HE STATED THAT THE INNER STABILITY OF THE SOCIALIST STATES WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.

13. CSCE: HONECKER PRAISED THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AS AN "EXCELLENT" DOCUMENT. HE EMPHASIZED THE PRINCIPLES OF NON-INTERFERENCE, THE INVIOABILITY OF BORDERS, AND RECOGNITION OF THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

AS ESSENTIAL TO THE RELAXATION OF TENSION IN EUROPE. WITH REGARD TO BELGRADE, HONECKER SAID IT SHOULD NOT BE USED TO LAY BARE THE SINS OF THE PARTIES, BUT TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD THE RELAXATION OF TENSIONS.

14. INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM: HONECKER DISMISSED AS "NORMAL" THE INNERCOMMUNIST ARGUMENT OVER WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE SEPARATE ROADS TO COMMUNISM AND DENIED THAT THE TERM "EURO-COMMUNISM" WAS USED BY ANY OF THE WESTERN COMMUNIST LEADERS WHO ATTENDED THE 1976 BERLIN CONFERENCE, THEREBY EVADING ANY REAL DISCUSSION OF THE INNER PARTY ISSUES BROUGHT ON BY EUROCOMMUNISM.

15. COMMENT: HONECKER'S INTERVIEW WAS APPARENTLY TIMED TO RESPOND TO WEST GERMAN AND ALLIED CONCERNS ABOUT GDR INTENTIONS ON INNER-GERMAN AND BERLIN MATTERS, AND TO PROVIDE AN AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNT TO THE GDR POPULATION ON MANY ISSUES OF DIRECT INTEREST. IT COMES AFTER THE GAUS-SPIEGEL AND THE SCHMIDT-STERN INTERVIEWS, AND THE DEBATE IN BONN ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THE BUNDESTAG WILL DEBATE INNER-GERMAN ISSUES AGAIN IN MARCH, AND HONECKER'S INTERVIEW APPEARS INTENDED TO STRIKE A MODERATE POSITION WITHOUT HOVER YIELDING ON ANY POINTS OF INTEREST TO THE GDR. HE STRIKES US AS CAVALIER WITH RESPECT TO ALLIED SENSITIVITIES AND INTERESTS CONCERNING BERLIN, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSERTING THAT ALLIED MEASURES WERE ONLY IN RESPONSE TO FRG PLEADINGS. HE SEEMS TO BE SAYING HE DOES NOT EXPECT THE ALLIES TO DO ANYTHING MORE REGARDING GDR MEASURES IN AND AROUND BERLIN.

16. WITH RESPECT TO FRG/GDR RELATIONS, THE INTERVIEW APPEARS INTENDED TO TONE DOWN CURRENT ELEMENTS OF CONFRONTATION AND TO SIGNAL AGAIN HONECKER'S DESIRE FOR IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT ONLY ON HIS TERMS. TOWARD THIS END, HONECKER REPEATED THE FORMULA THAT INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS MUST BE BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT, WITH EXPLICIT FRG RECOGNITION OF GDR CITIZENSHIP AS A PRIME CONDITION FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE ABILITY OF GDR CITIZENS TO TRAVEL TO THE WEST. A USUALLY RELIABLE EMBASSY CONTACT, DR. HEINZ KOSIN OF THE GDR INSTITUTE IPW, TOLD AN EMBASSY FEB. 20 THAT THE HONECKER INTERVIEW IS A SIGNAL THAT, DESPITE STRAINED FRG/GDR RELATIONS IN RECENT MONTHS, THE TIME HAS COME TO COOL OFF. FROM THE HONECKER INTERVIEW AND KOSIN'S ASSESSMENT, IT APPEARS THAT

THE GDR MAY NOW EXPECT A PERIOD OF STAGNATION IN FRG/GDR RELATIONS. HONECKER'S INTERVIEW REFLECTS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF INITIATIVE IN OSTPOLITIK WHILE INDICATING THE GDR CAN LIVE WITH THE STATUS QUO AND DOES NOT DESIRE A WORSENING OF RELATIONS. HONECKER'S STATEMENT THAT FREEDOM OF TRAVEL FOR GDR CITIZENS IS LINKED TO FRG RECOGNITION OF GDR CITIZENSHIP APPEARS TO BE A REJECTION OF THE FRG POSITION WHICH DENIES THAT TRAVEL AND CITIZENSHIP ARE LINKED.

17. HONECKER'S INTERVIEW ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO COUNTER A GROWING MOOD OF UNCERTAINTY AMONG THE GDR POPULATION. GDR CONTACT KOSIN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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URGING SINCE EARLY JANUARY THAT HONECKER GO ON RECORD WITH A COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT OF GDR POLICY TO CLEAR UP THE UNCERTAINTIES THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM THE BIERMANN AFFAIR, GDR INITIATIVES IN BERLIN, AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE FRG PERMREP.

18. HONECKER'S MORE IMPORATNT SIGNALS TO HIS OWN POPULATION IN THE INTERVIEW ARE: (1) HE IS IN CONTROL OF A COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE GDR POLICY THAT HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE GDR'S ALLIES; (2) THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN RESTRICTIONS ON WESTERN TRAVEL BY GDR CITIZENS AS LONG AS THE FRG DOES NOT RECOGNIZE GDR CITIZENSHIP; (3) THE GDR IS NOT PLANNING TO CUT BACK ON THE LEVEL OF FRG VISITS TO THE GDR; (4) THERE IS CAUSE FOR MIL OPTIMISM REGARDING THE GDR ECONOMY, AND CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICIES WILL BE MAINTAINED; (5) HONECKER'S MATTER OF FACT RESPONSE ON BIERMANN IN WHICH HE BLAMED BIERMANN EXCLUSIVELY FOR HIS OWN EXPULSION FROM THE GDR, MAY ADUMBRATE A FUTURE EASING UP ON THE GDR CULTURAL SCENE, AN IMPRESSION REINFORCED BY HONECKER'S CLOSING REMARK ABOUT EXHAUSTING ALL POSSIBILITIES IN THE DULTURAL REALM.

19. THE ONLY APPARENT OMISSION IN THE ND VERSION COMPARED TO THAT IN THE SZ CAME IN REGARD TO GDR EMIGRATION TO THE FRG. IN THE SZ TEXT, THE INTERVIEWER ASKED WHETHER THE FIGURE OF 10,000 WAS CORRECT FOR THE NUMBER OF EMIGRATION/APPLICATIONS APPROVED BY THE GDR IN 1976. HONECKER THEN INDIRECTLY CONFIRMED THE FIGURE BY SAYING THAT THE PRESS REPORTS ON THESE FIGURES WERE ROUGHLY ACCURATE. IN THE ND VERSION, HONECKER CONFIRMS WESTERN PRESS REPORTS, BUT WITHOUT

SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE APPROVAL OF 10,000 APPLICATIONS.
THE SAARBRUECKER VERSION ALSO CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING
HONECKER REMARK OMITTED IN ND: "WITH REGARD TO THE
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FEW (EMIGRATION APPLICATIONS) THAT ARE NOT APPROVED,
THEY MAKE A FUSS; BUT THEY REMAIN SILENT ABOUT THE
LARGE NUMBER OF APPROVED APPLICATIONS." MEANWHILE,
THE ND VERSION ADDS THE FOLLOWING QUOTE NOT
CONTAINED IN THE SZ: "WE ARE FOR FAMILY REUNIFICATION,
BUT NOT FOR TEARING FAMILIES APART." POLANSKY

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